United Nations E/AC.51/2001/L.6/Add.15

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
6 July 2001

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-first session
11 June-6 July 2001
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-first session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Ayman M. **Elgammal** (Egypt)

Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

(item 4 (a))

Section 13. Human settlements

1. At its 25th meeting, on 27 June 2001, the Committee considered section 13, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the activities undertaken by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Appreciation was expressed for the actions taken by the Centre to streamline its activities.

4. The high quality of the budget document for section 13 was commended. Although the objective of subprogramme 1, to improve the shelter conditions of the world's urban poor, was fully supported, the view was expressed that the concept of "secure tenure" under expected accomplishment (a) in table 13.7 should not be encouraged, as the adequacy of resources for its implementation was questionable. It was considered that the Centre should complete its work programme prior to engaging in other projects.

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5. There was overall support for the proposed budget, although the proposal for the reclassification of three posts in the Professional category was questioned. It was noted that, in the context of the revitalization of the Centre, the upgrading sought to correct historical discrepancies whereby posts had stagnated at low levels while substantive responsibilities had increased. In that regard, it was pointed out that at its eighteenth session the Commission on Human Settlements had authorized the Executive Director to raise the budget ceiling, including posts, funded from voluntary contributions, as part of organizational adjustments in the revitalization effort.

6. It was noted that 90.1 per cent of the estimated resources that would be available to the programme during the biennium 2002-2003 would be from extrabudgetary resources and a question was raised on the criteria used in allocating such resources. In view of the significant dependency on extrabudgetary resources to implement the proposed work programme, concern was expressed about the negative impact that the lower level of extrabudgetary resources projected for the biennium 2002-2003 would have on the programme of work. It was queried whether firm commitments had been received for the level of extrabudgetary resources estimated and whether the level of resources proposed would be adequate to implement the programme of work. In that regard, it was stated that there was an apparent contradiction between the proposed increase in extrabudgetary posts and the related footnote to table 13.3 and the reduced level of extrabudgetary resources reflected in table 13.2. In reply, it was noted that the estimated level of extrabudgetary resources was conservative as it excluded the resources likely to be available in the biennium 2002-2003 but which could not currently be incorporated in projections because the necessary intergovernmental approval had not yet been granted.

7. A question was asked on specific action the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements intended to take with respect to the Declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium, adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth special session, in particular the paragraph on removing obstacles to the realization of the rights of the peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation. It was explained that the Declaration was crucial to the work of Habitat, and that the Centre would develop a programme of action to implement it. It was also stressed that the Declaration was to be implemented by all the relevant organizations of the United Nations system.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 13, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, subject to the following modifications:

Table 13.9

Under *Expected accomplishments*, replace the words "city authorities" with the words "local authorities".